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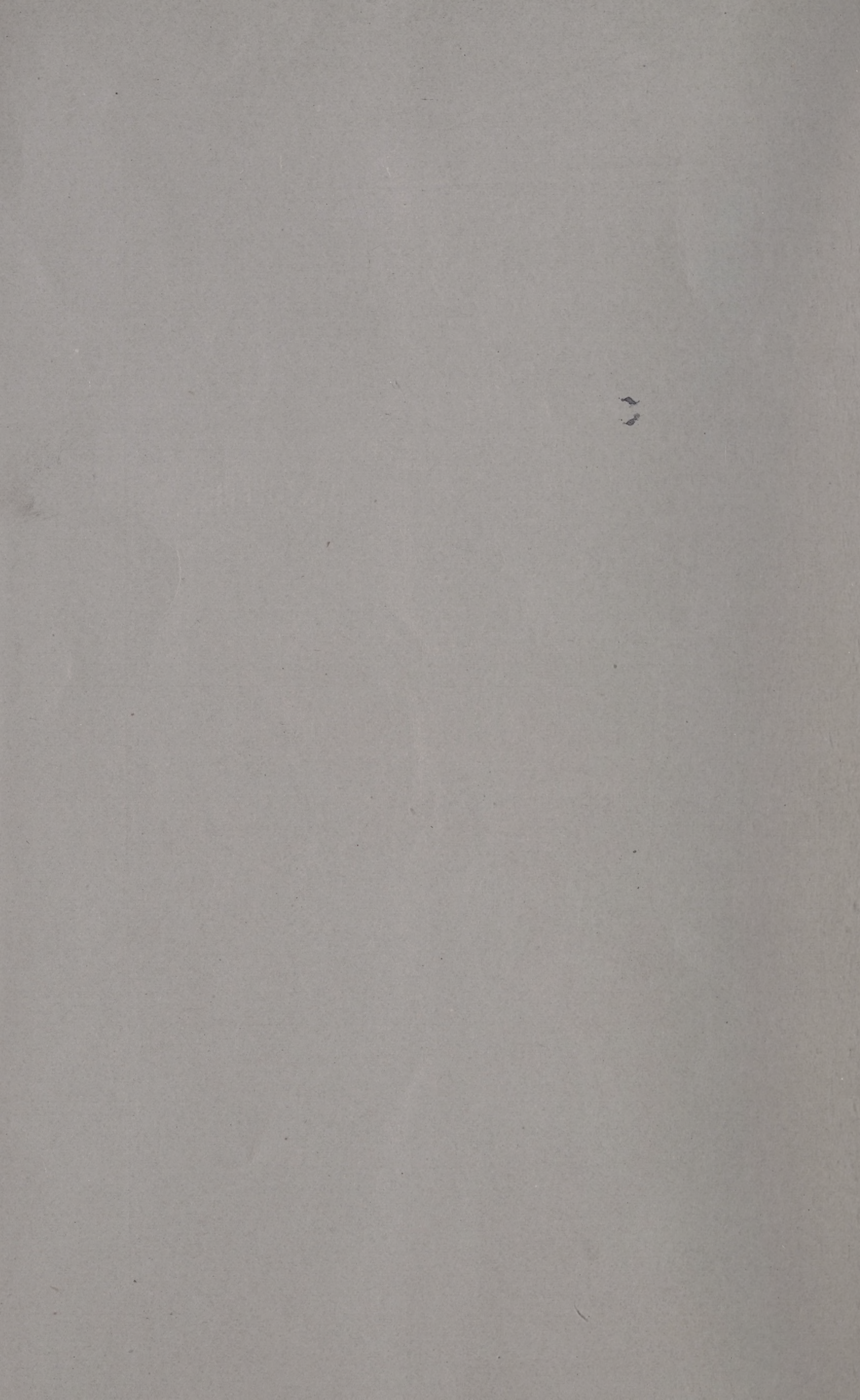
A TALE OF THE MEXICAN BANDITTI.

BY WM. NELSON.

[ÆT. XII.]

PRIVATELY PRINTED.

1884.



With Compliments of
the Author.

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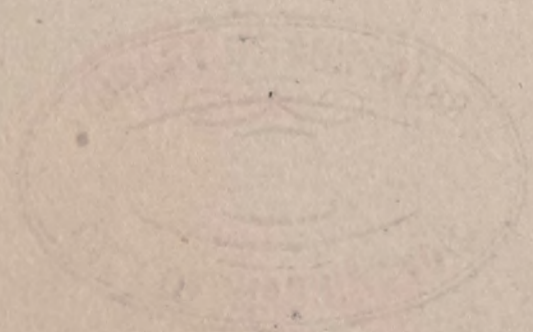
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Only twenty-five copies printed.

No. 15

W. Nelson,

The following production was read in instalments to the Third—now the C—Class of the Newark Public High School, in May and June, 1859 (the writer having been admitted to that institution in April), and by request of the Class was afterwards read before the whole school on one of the Friday afternoons then devoted to “literary exercises.” As the work of a lad but twelve years old this amateur attempt at fiction made quite an impression on the young hearers, some of whom have often expressed a desire to read it for themselves. The original manuscript having recently come to light, the story has been put in print, to gratify this wish on the part of a few friends of the author. The edition has been limited to twenty-five copies, merely for private circulation. It is presumed the supply will equal the demand. The story has been printed precisely as written, without any revision of the crudities of the young writer. As originally read before his Class, however, the story was entitled: “A Narrow Escape. From the Unpublished Chronicles of a Traveler.” The Class teacher suggested the present title.

How the author came to select his theme, and how the details of the plot came to suggest themselves to his mind, it is now impossible to say. There is apparently a flavor of the Arabian Nights, however, in the robbers' cave, the secret passages, hidden doors and the like, and the writer moreover has some recollection of a grand scheme which he and certain comrades of his own years and wisdom had on foot at this time, to excavate an extensive cavern under an unoccupied lot on Sheffield street near the Morris and Essex Railroad (Newark), wherein to hold youthful conclaves of a vague and mysterious character. Perchance the philosophical inquirer into the persistency of hereditary types will discover in this fondness for caverns, to be found among boys, and men who are only boys, a reminiscence of our troglodyte ancestors!

PATERSON, N. J., CHRISTMAS, 1884.

ISABEL:

A TALE OF THE MEXICAN BANDITTI.

—(†)—

Once upon a time, as I was transacting some business in a Western State, I had occasion to go to the small town of G——, to see about some very important matters, and as there were no railroads in the vicinity I was obliged to go by stage. So I got ready one fine bracing morning in the month of March. After transferring myself and baggage into the coach I took a seat and having looked around I was agreeably surprised to find that I had but one traveling companion, a middle-sized gentleman whose face betokened a lifetime of adventures. However, I was resolved to draw him out, if possible. He sat apparently thinking of some exciting incident of his past life. With my view in mind I took a seat over beside him, and sat looking out of the window, as if I was admiring the beauties of nature, while in reality I was revolving in my mind what I should say to the mysterious stranger. At last I mustered courage to address him. Said I: "It is a very fine morning, sir." The stranger started and raising his head said, "Did you speak to me, sir?" "Yes, sir," said I; "I said it was a fine morning." "Oh, ah! Yes. That is, it is a very fine morning, sir," said he, and again relapsed into silence. Nothing daunted, however, I again spoke to him. "Sir," said I, "do you not think it would be a good plan to tell stories to each other to relieve the tediousness of our journey?" "Yes," said he, "suppose you begin?" This I was not very willing to do, so offering some trivial excuse about not thinking of any just then, I requested him to begin. After resting his head upon his hand, as if to collect his thoughts, he began as follows:

"I was always possessed of a wild, wandering disposition, which seemed to be the bane of my life. In my childhood I used to ride on the little calves and young colts that belonged about the farm, and I often paid very dear for my rashness when the animals took it into their heads to throw me. But I shall pass over my boyish adventures and endeavor to give you an outline of one of my many adventures which came near resulting in death to me.

"When I had attained my manhood for a few years I resolved to go to Mexico in quest of something to relieve the tediousness of my lonely life, for my parents had been dead for several years. So pack-

ing up my effects, at least such as I thought needful, and taking care to see that I had plenty of fire-arms and ammunition, and also that passport to favor in all countries—plenty of money—I got upon a train which was to take me on part of my way. After eight weeks' hard travel I arrived at the city of Mexico, safe and sound, except a little wayworn. I stayed there a while to recruit my health. While I was there I mingled with the dark-eyed señoritas pretty freely, and caused many a lover to watch me with jealous eyes. Not long after I had been introduced into the highest circles of Mexican society I met with the lovely Donna Isabella—but she is now dead," said the stranger, wiping his eyes with his handkerchief. "But to continue. Almost before I was aware of it, I had fallen desperately in love with her. Shortly after I had become acquainted with her, I proposed my heart, hand and fortune, when she, with tears in her eyes, told me that she had been engaged for several years, before I arrived there, but that continued obstacles had been in the way of their marriage. Sometimes she thought that her intended was faithless, and that she intended to discard him if they were not married on the next appointed day. I, from my inmost soul, hoped that something would intervene, and with a promise of friendship from her I took my leave, telling her that I would see her again.

"The next day I hired a coach to take me to a neighboring town, for I could not bear to stay there any longer. I gave some directions to the driver about a few things and then went up stairs to see if my trunk was all right. I opened it and took out two pair of revolvers. I examined the priming carefully,* to see if there was anything the matter with them. Finding them all right I placed them in my trunk again and turned the key in the lock, without taking it out. I then proceeded down stairs to see about something to eat before starting. I did not notice the stealthy form of my driver crouched up in one corner. If I had seen him then I might have been spared a great deal of sorrow, pain and trouble. It was pretty late when we started, but I was in no mood then to think about time.

"We got on pretty well for the first day or two. On the third day or evening we came to the outskirts of a large wood, which we entered about nightfall. This did not make me cheerful, I must confess, and yet it did not make me afraid. However, we jogged along—or rather the horses did—till we came to a very dark place, then all of a sudden the horses were stopped and several heads were poked in the windows of the coach. I tried to get my pistols out in time to prevent the entrance of the ruffians, and finally succeeded in doing so. I fired them all off in rapid succession, but to my surprise they laughed at

*The first revolvers were loaded with powder and ball. The writer did not know this when the above was written, but probably the "mysterious stranger" did.

me, as if nothing was going on. This made me think that somebody had been handling my pistols. But suddenly the truth flashed upon my mind, that the balls had been extracted from them, and who could gain access to them so easily as my driver? These thoughts passed through my brain more quickly than I now relate them to you. While I was cogitating these things in my mind, I was aroused by the harsh voice of one of the robbers outside, saying: 'Come, Senor, jump out here!' Of course I had no alternative but to obey with as good grace as possible; so jumping out on the ground, I felt my arms secured from behind, with my elbows meeting. This was no very pleasant situation for me at this time, I assure you, but I was obliged to submit to it. Some sort of a heavy sack or mantle was then thrown over my head, to guard against any stray ray of light coming to my eyes. In this manner I was hurried on for some time till I felt the cold, damp air of a subterranean vault or cave. Suddenly I was relieved of the mantle on my head and my arms were untied. Looking up, my eyes were saluted with a dazzling blaze of light. As soon as I got accustomed to it I found myself an inmate of a spacious cave or underground chamber. It was brilliantly lighted with large lamps suspended from the ceiling. It was also furnished very well, being supplied with numerous tables scattered about the room, and around which I saw several men playing, or rather gambling for gold, my driver among them. I instantly perceived that he was one of the bandits. A great many eyes were turned upon me, as if they wanted to know why I was there. That was soon explained by the driver—Antonio, as he was called, who it seemed had just entered about a moment before. When he had finished his recital he was greeted with shouts of applause by his hearers. Just as I was recovering my senses a couple of men came in and told me in a gruff voice to follow them. I obeyed, and took special pains to notice everything on my way, such as a projection from the side of the passage, for I thought I might have occasion to travel that way again, without anybody to guide me. In short, I thought I might make my escape that way. I could easily see that part of the way was made by nature, and part by human agency. On we went, along the dark, dismal passages, up steep ascents, then down again, my guides—one behind and one before—never speaking a word to me, until we came to a place where the passage seemed to end.* But the man in front went right straight ahead, and when he got near the wall in front of us, he pushed his hand against a particular spot, when, as if by magic, the wall seemed to divide, leaving an open space through which we entered into a small, richly furnished apartment,

*The first instalment of the original manuscript ended here with a "to be continued," and the listeners were kept in an agonizing suspense until the next fortnightly "composition day" necessitated a resumption of the narrative.

when the wall behind us immediately closed up. I was completely bewildered, with the twisting and turning, as well as with the sights I had seen since my coach had been stopped. After a little while my head became sufficiently clear to enable me to discover where I was and all that I had seen on my way. I also knew why I had been brought there. I supposed they had meant to take all my valuables, or else get a ransom for me, but it seemed more likely that they would do both.

“I looked around and saw up in one end of the room a sort of throne, richly set with pearls, diamonds and all sorts of precious stones. Over this throne was a small canopy covered with small stars of gold and silver. From the arched roof hung a magnificent golden chandelier, sparkling with diamonds in the bright light of the waxen tapers. Having thus made myself acquainted with the inanimate contents of the apartment, I then next turned my attention to the animate. Under the canopy before mentioned was seated a man of decidedly handsome and also villanous appearance. There seemed to be something familiar about him, so I thought, and upon looking at him again my suspicions were verified. He was my rival to the hand of my dear Isabella. And she was to be the wife of a brigand chief! The thought was maddening, and I inwardly resolved to prevent it. As yet he knew not that I was his rival. He was of a muscular development, very broad shouldered and had a full chest. Still, this did not mar his beauty and symmetry. But when one came to look at his countenance they could easily see, even if they were not physiognomists, that the heart within was black as Erebus.* I knew that he was their chief, for who would occupy that place besides him? Surely, no one. Another incident here occurred to verify my opinion. As I was looking at him I saw the men bow to him, as if he had been a king.

“‘Captain,’ said one, ‘here is the prisoner.’

“The chief waved his hand for them to withdraw. They immediately obeyed. When they had left the room the chief turned to me.

“‘Sir,’ said he, ‘you see we have been a little rough with you.’

“‘Oh, yes, of course,’ said I, ironically.

“The chief did not notice the manner in which I had spoken, † but again said to me :

“‘It is our custom when we entertain travelers a little while to require a little gold from their friends as a testimonial of regard for them. Do you understand me, sir?’

* While the author was reading this remarkable production to his spellbound classmates, the teacher—Mr. Howell—interrupted him to ask the meaning of the word “Erebus.” The little fellow blushed, looked down and murmured, “the bad place.” The teacher was satisfied.

†How very stupid of him, to be sure!

“‘I think I do, sir. You mean that you require that my friends shall give a ransom for me, or else I shall be murdered.’

“‘Well,’ said he, ‘if you wish to say it in such a harsh manner you can. But what do you think your friends will do about you? Do you think they will give a good ransom?’

“‘How much do you require?’ said I.

“‘Well,’ said he, ‘as you seem to be civil, we will let you off for five thousand dollars.’

“‘If I pay you myself,’ said I, ‘I suppose you would let me off?’

“‘Oh, then you have money along? But you will not need it here. We will provide for you, and as for paying your way out, we will not for a moment think of that. We wish your friends to pay your ransom, to show their regard for you.’

“‘After talking a little while longer I was informed in the most gentle manner that my money was to be confiscated, and that my ransom must be paid in three months, or else I was to be helped over a precipice near by, as it was the shortest way to the country below.

“‘I had only one hope, and that was to make my escape, for I did not expect that anyone in the city would pay my ransom, seeing that they had only been acquainted with me for a very short time. After thinking the matter over I resolved to write to one of my friends and tell him where I was, and what was required of me, and I told him to make all possible haste and send the money. I also told him where to leave it. Having hastily penciled these few lines on a leaf out of my pocketbook, I handed it to the chieftain to read, who, when he had perused its contents, seemed satisfied and told me that it would be given to the gentleman the very next day. Having satisfied ourselves upon this matter, the chief, whom we will call Bartaloni,* which I think was really his name, touched a small bell near by, when the door through which I had entered opened again and a small boy of about fourteen years, † entered.”

“‘Take this gentleman to yonder room,’ said the chief to him, pointing to the right of the apartment. The boy beckoned to me to follow him. I did so. When he got to the wall, on which hung several exceedingly large pictures—

“‘What’s that?’ said he, looking around as if listening to something. I turned my head around to see if I could see anything particular, but I instantly perceived that it was a ruse on the part of my companion to attract my attention from him while he opened the secret door. We went into another apartment of about the same kind as the

*Although the scene of the story is laid among a Spanish-speaking people, Antonio and Bartaloni are rather Italian names, if, indeed, the latter is not an invention of the writer’s.

†This is cool. The author, only twelve, and undersized for his age, speaking of “a small boy of fourteen years!”

one I had just left. The chief told the young lad to attend regularly to all my wants. The boy soon left, after having shown me a small lamp of silver up in a niche in the wall. He lit it for me, and showed me a box of matches with which I could light the lamp when I wished. He also took care to close the door after him, and so nicely did it fit that I could not see where it was. But I knew about where the door had been, and then I remembered that the picture on the other side of the wall had disappeared when I turned around, so that I knew it must slide some way, whether down, up or to one side, I knew not.

“Well, I stayed here for a considerable time. By my watch I judged it to be about three weeks, and I thought I had explored my prison to the utmost, when one morning, just after a man had left provisions for the day, I thought I saw a small ray of light. It made me jump for joy. You may be sure I was in a hurry to examine it, and see my chance for escape. I brought my lamp, and quickly saw that the cave extended no farther in that direction, but the wall had been broken away there, and perhaps the bandits had another door there through which they might escape if there were any danger. As I was looking about I saw a paper in a hole in the rock. I got it, and having opened it read the contents. They were in substance as follows :

“‘Whoever finds this paper, if they are prisoners in this room it may be useful to them to look at the following directions : In this hole where you find this paper there is a spring. Push your arm in here and you will press it, and a panel will slide back. Then you will find a pair of winding stairs. Go down the stairs till you get to the very bottom. There you will see four passages. Traverse the one to the right till you come to a place where the passage seemingly stops. Then you will see a red spot on the wall before you. Press on that and you will be at liberty.’

“I tell you what, I was not long in following those directions, though it seemed curious to me how he could know the way to get out, for if he had once got out it did not seem likely that he would come back and write out directions for anyone else to get out. But then, he might have got outside and seen some of the robbers coming toward him, and retreated to his apartment, and then had been guarded sharply so that he could not have a favorable opportunity to escape afterwards. I sat down and was thinking the matter over, and was looking over the paper I had in my hands, when I saw that I had not read the whole of it. I quickly opened it and read the rest. It went on to say that he had been guarded pretty well, but he had found another way out, which would not be so dangerous for him, as they had not guarded it then. It told who had written it, and the name of the chief.

“I got up and put the paper in my pocket, and was not long in following those directions, as I said before. I took my lamp with me, for

fear of accidents happening on the road. All was right with me, and the same as was written in the paper. Down the winding stairs, through the passage on the right, until finally I stood before the last barrier to liberty, as I supposed. But as I was about to press the spring, I heard voices on the other side of the wall. Then I heard a sharp cry of pain—a heavy fall—a groan, and then all was still. I sprang to the side of the wall from which the sound appeared to proceed. I saw a small projection of the rock, and pressed it, when a door moved to one side and I entered. When I had entered I saw a fine, handsome young cavalier, with a drawn sword in his hand, which was still red with the blood of the unfortunate man on the floor. I started back aghast at the sight, but the young man took it all very coolly, though he eyed me sharply. Pretty soon we got on intimate terms, when I found that he was the benevolent gentleman who had left the directions for escaping from the cave.

“‘God bless you!’ said I, ‘for you have saved my life, and I shall always be indebted to you.

“‘Tut, tut,’ said he; ‘I did not know that you would be put in there; and besides, I did not know that I could not have got out of this infernal place—’

“‘At this juncture we heard a noise, as of men walking towards us.

“‘Here! this way,’ said I, as I bounded toward the door through which I entered. But I found I was mistaken in that direction, for the door was closed.

“‘Take these pistols,’ said my companion, handing me a pair of revolvers taken from the fallen man. I grasped them firmly, and having cocked them I stood ready for the foe when he should enter. But the foe did not enter, and after listening until the footsteps died away, we set about seeing how to get out. I had set the lamp down when we heard the steps approaching. I now took it up in one hand, while in the other I held the pistols. I soon found the spring, and having opened the door I beckoned to my companion to follow me. He did so, and when he got outside of the apartment he told me we were in the wrong passage. We saw how it was that we had heard the footsteps; the door through which I was about to go led to the large apartment where I was taken on the night of my capture. Here certainly was the hand of Providence. There I was about to walk right into the lion’s den, when I was arrested by the cry which finally would lead to our escape, for we could not doubt but that we would make our escape now. We got back to the foot of the winding stairs, when I saw wherein lay my mistake. I had gone through the wrong passage. There were three walls, and in the wall in front of us there were what seemed to be two doors, while in reality there was but one door. The other was but an aperture dug in the rock like a door.. On the left

there was only one door, but on the right there were two doors, one so far back in the shade that one could scarcely see the other one. The one I had gone through could be seen almost without looking; so it appeared very natural that I should make the mistake I did.

“I asked my young companion how it was that he came to be where I had found him? He told me he had been taken in about the same manner in which I had been. He had been taken to the apartment where I had found the paper. He had been taken in 18—.

“‘Why, said I, ‘That is nearly four years ago!’

“‘What!’ said he, ‘have I lost four years of my precious time?’

“I could not help pitying the young man when I saw the look of agony that passed over his countenance.

“‘How or why did the chief keep you here so long?’ said I, anxious to change the subject.

“‘Because,’ he replied, ‘he wished to wed my sister, and I was opposed to their marriage, and told her that he was a bad man, and that she should beware of him. So he, out of revenge, captured me one day when I was riding out alone, and put me in the room where you found those papers. As I told you, one day (or night it was to me, as I had no light), as I was feeling around the wall of the apartment my hand went into that hole, and before I could draw it out I saw part of the wall slide back, or perhaps it would be better to say that I *felt* it slide back. I stepped cautiously through the aperture and found the stairs. As I was feeling my way down a little piece of the rock gave way and I saw the light of day for the first time since my capture. I looked up on the clear blue sky for a few moments, when I remembered where I was, and proceeded on till I came to the foot of the stairs, when some way I turned around and fortunately I went through the right door. I went on till I came to a door, which I opened, and found myself in the open air. I was just going away when I thought I might be seen by some of the bandits, and perhaps I should need provisions. On the whole, I concluded to remain until night set in. I then went back to the hole I had made, and took out a curious contrivance that contained pen, ink and paper, and which I still carry. I wrote on the paper the directions you found, and put the paper in the hole. That night I left the apartment, with provisions enough to last me for one or two days. I also took a little water. Unfortunately, when I got to the foot of the stairs, I went through the wrong door, and you know the consequence. I was captured.’

“‘Who is your sister?’ said I; ‘what is her name?’

“‘Isabel,’ said the young man laconically.

“‘So I supposed.’

“I then told him my relations to her. When I had done, he grasped my hand.

“‘I will help you to press your suit. But we must be off, for even a moment’s delay may be fatal.’

“We had been sitting on the stairs, to get rested a little, while this conversation took place. We now started up and went through the right passage. We went on until we came to the door which kept us from liberty. We pressed the spring, the door flew open, and before us lay a lovely scene.

“It was dark, and the moon and stars were shining out, shedding a serene light over the beautiful valley below us. I tell you, no person but one who has been in a similar situation can imagine our feelings then. We simultaneously fell upon our knees and offered up a prayer of thanksgiving to God who had thus signally saved our lives. We then set about getting down, for we were on the brow of a steep precipice, and there was no way to be seen to get down. We were about giving up our search, when my companion told me that he had found a way to get down. He showed me a couple of vines twisted around each other, climbing up the face of the rock. We tried them, and found them secure enough to bear a great weight. My companion went down first, I followed. After sliding, slipping and scratching our hands and tearing our clothes for half an hour at least, we reached the ground in safety. We traveled around down the side of the mountain till we saw a light through the trees. It was a beacon of hope to us, for we were well nigh despairing. However, after dragging our weary limbs along for a while we at last reached a small hut. We knocked at the door, and sank down from exhaustion. A man came to the door, and seeing us lying there carried us in and put us by the fire. We were asleep almost on the instant. In the morning we were up early and felt greatly refreshed. We told the man that we had just escaped from a cave up in the mountains, where we had been kept by the robbers. The man said he would take us to the city at once, and there we could complain to the authorities and have the bandits arrested. We got prepared as soon as possible, and started for the town under the guidance of the man into whose house we had happily been brought. We reached the gates of the city at about eight o’clock in the morning, and proceeded to the house of a magistrate a little distance off. We stated the case to him, and he was very glad to secure our services to guide a band of soldiers to the robbers’ cave. He told us to be ready early the next morning.

“We next proceeded to the house in which Donna Isabella now resided. We found festivities going on. Upon asking what was the matter, we were told that the lady was to be married that afternoon. My companion revealed himself to a few of the old servants, who were overjoyed to see their young master. Without a moment’s delay we went back to the magistrate and told him that if he would let us have

four stout, trustworthy men we would bring the robber chief, Bartaloni, before him in the evening. The magistrate was willing to let us have four hundred men if we would bring the dread Bartaloni to him. However, we only wanted four men, and so we took them. We then went with the soldiers to the shop of a Jew, for you must know that those enterprising, money-making people are to be found in every country and clime. When we went in we found the little Jew behind the counter, serving some customers. When they had gone out we told the Jew we wanted some disguises. He then led the way to a small back room and commenced showing us all sorts of clothes. At length we fixed upon the dress of merchants, so fixing them on we browned our faces and hands with some sort of stuff that the Jew had. We left enough money to pay for the clothes in case we should not return them. Perhaps you will think it strange that we should have some money, but it will suffice to say that I had kept nearly all the gold that I had when I was captured.

“The whole six of us then went to the house of the bride. We saw a man standing at the door. My young companion went up to him and whispered a few words in his ear; the man stepped aside and let us pass. Away we went, when the servants told us that the priest was there with the couple before him in an apartment upstairs. They told us which apartment it was, and two steps at a time we went upstairs, along the corridors until we stood before the identical door. There was a man there, but Don Carlos, my young friend, thrust him aside and passed in just in time to hear the priest ask if anyone present had any objections to the marriage of the couple then standing up. Don Carlos did not say anything to the priest, but gave one bound toward the bridegroom and felled him to the floor. Isabella shrieked and sank fainting into my arms. I bore her to a couch, and having laid her upon it I applied all the restoratives within reach, and soon had the satisfaction of seeing her open her eyes. Meanwhile all was confusion. The soldiers seeing the way clear, advanced and bound the conquered man hand and foot with ropes that they had brought with them for the purpose.

“These things were done in less than a minute. Now the people who had come to see the marriage ceremony performed were standing around the fallen man with dark looks and threatening gestures; but Don Carlos soon explained himself and told who we were. He then requested them to leave us alone, and appointed a day when he would tell them all about our adventures. Most of them passed out, but we noticed three men who cast rather longing looks towards Bartaloni, as if they wished to take him with them. I had only obtained a side look at their faces, but now one of them turned his face full toward me. I immediately recognized him as one of the robbers whom I had seen in the

large cave where I was taken first after my capture. I went around behind him to the door, as if I was looking for something. When I got near it I turned the key in the lock and then put it in my pocket. Don Carlos had seen this manoeuvre and looked questioningly at me. I pointed at the men before me. He looked at them a moment, and he seemed to recognize them. I hit the one nearest to me a blow which knocked him over. Don Carlos settled another, when the remaining one surrendered. The whole of these transactions, from the time when Carlos had first entered the apartment to the time when we settled the three bandits, had occurred in less than half an hour.

“Isabella had completely recovered herself. She nearly fainted when we revealed ourselves to her, especially when she saw her dear brother standing alive before her. She received me cordially also. Then she asked why we had dealt so with the man she was going to marry. We told her who he was, and thereupon we gave a complete account of all our adventures. We had a happy time that night. We did not permit the soldiers to go home, but kept them there that night with the prisoners.

“The next morning we went with the soldiers and the prisoners to the magistrate. He gave us a large party of soldiers with which to take the bandits. We took one of the bandits to guide us if we could not find the cave. When we got there we could not find one of the robbers. We searched every place around the cave that we could think of, but not a trace of them could we find. The robber then told us that he thought they must have had spies in town, who when they had heard what had become of their chief, had gone back and told the rest of the band, and then the whole company had gone away and taken what gold and other valuables they could get. We took all away that we could and then went back to the city.

“The next day was appointed for the trial of Bartaloni, but there was not much chance of his escape from the just punishment that awaited him. Nevertheless, he did escape it; but only by a dreadful alternative, that of suicide. The turnkey went in the morning and found him lying dead on the floor of the cell. We were glad of it, for we did not like to go and witness against him. Isabella was glad, too, although she had never liked him, her friends having persuaded her to marry him.

“Two weeks after these events I again proposed to my beloved Isabella, and this time with better success, and she herself appointed the day for our marriage, which happened to be the same as Carlos had appointed for the relation of our adventures. The eventful day came and we were married. After the festivities were over we related our adventures to a crowd of attentive listeners. Two or three days after, we started on our wedding tour, Don Carlos accompanying us. We went

through nearly all the principal States in the Union. Once when we were resting at a small country town we met a lovely young girl, whom Carlos married shortly after. When we returned to Mexico we found it nearly the same as ever; only some of the friends of my bride had fixed up the cave that had hitherto been the residence of robbers, and it was now a cool summer residence. Often did we repair to this delicious grotto and think of our remarkable escape.

“Two short years passed in this manner; but they were too good to last long, and at the beginning of the third year my wife faded and died. I buried her, and having erected a costly monument to her memory I returned to this country nearly heart-broken.”

Here the stranger burst into an irrepressible flood of tears. After his grief had subsided a little I asked him what became of the three robbers that were captured?

“They were pardoned, on condition of leaving the country forever, which they did, and were never heard of after.”

At this moment G———— was announced, and as I was going out here and my fellow traveler was going on further, I took leave of him.

“I hope I may see you again, sir,” said I, “for I am greatly in your debt, and you know I said I would tell a story, too, which I have not done.”

“Come, hurry up there!” said the driver.

I lifted my heavy portmanteau and walked slowly away, musing on the strange history of him who had been my companion. I have never seen him since, so I am still in his debt.

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